SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Isabel School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2003-004

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Date of Report: November 8, 2003

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice   The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.

Meets Requirements   The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.

Needs Improvement   The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.

Out of Compliance   The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.

Not applicable   In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary
Data sources used:
- Comprehensive plan
- Child find articles
- Screening announcement
- Referral/evaluation/placement data
- File reviews

- Enrollment data
- Annual application for IDEA funds
- General district information
- Screening list

Meets requirements
The steering committee determined that Isabel School District implements an effective on-going child find system. Child find activities include in home screenings when necessary.

Pre-referral assistance is available to teachers upon request, and referral procedures are consistently implemented.

Procedures have been adopted for the provision of services to children with disabilities voluntarily enrolled in private school should the situation occur.

Special education and related services are provided to children placed in a private facility by the district.

Dakota Step, DAC's test results, and Title I data are considered along with other assessment information to determine current levels of academic performance and to plan for future course work for students with special education needs.

Discipline policies are reviewed annually and revised to meet suspension/expulsion requirements.

Needs improvement
The steering committee determined that the district has some teachers who are working towards appropriate certification to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

Validation Results

Promising practice
Through interviews and observation the review team determined that Isabel has a rotation of mobile units that move every semester. Each school in the NWAS Multidistrict has two different units every year. Students take the class 2 periods a day for a semester. One period is usually lecture and the next a lab. Units include:
- Agriculture
- CadCam
- Health Occupations
- Foods (the students actually run a café)
- Small Engine Repair
- Welding
- Electronics
- Building Trades

The CTEC network cabling course allows students to earn networking cabling specialist certification.

Through observations the review team determined the tech unit to be a promising practice. The tech unit is at the school the first 12 weeks of the school year. The 7th and 8th graders work each day on a variety of projects. There are 2 different units that alternate so that students are able to experience both units during Junior High. The tech unit modules include:

- Forensics

- Rocketry
- Scroll Saw
- Mechanisms & Machines
- Electronic Publishing

Through observation students are in full inclusion in these units. Students work in teams that are changed with each unit. All students were fully engaged. There are high expectations and achievement for students. Students learn to help each other, and they are exposed to 20 different modules over 2 years at middle school.

The review team also determined the after-school program to be a promising practice. The program is for upper and lower grades meeting Monday through Thursday 3:15 until 4:30. This gives students study time, an adult to help, and computer availability.

Through observation and interviews with the staff and students the review team found the Success Maker Program a promising practice. This is an individualized program used by K-8 students. This program focuses on reading and math at each child's level. Students use this program every day.

Meets requirements
The review team agrees with the areas identified by the steering committee as meets requirements.

Needs improvement
The review team agrees with the areas identified by the steering committee as needs improvement.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary
Data sources used:
- Comprehensive plan
- Child count data
- District budget
- Annual IDEA application for funds
- Parent surveys
- Age and placement data table I
- Student file reviews

Meets requirements
The steering committee determined that FAPE is provided to all eligible children with disabilities.

The district policy ensures FAPE will be provided to a student with disabilities should they be suspended or expelled.

Validation Results

Meets requirements
The review team agrees with all areas identified by the steering committee as meeting the requirements in the area of free appropriate public education.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary
Data sources used:
- MDT/eligibility report
- Comprehensive plan
- Student file reviews
- Compliance monitoring report
- Interview
- Teacher surveys
- Prior notice/consent
- Parent surveys
- CSPD needs assessment

Promising practice
The steering committee concluded that a promising practice is to administer tests that meet the requirements for the state.

Meets requirements
The steering committee concluded that comprehensive evaluations are administered with parental input. Testing instruments continue to be updated to ensure valid reliable results.

Written notice and consent are required prior to evaluation. Evaluation procedures and instruments that meet requirements are administered to students. Functional assessments are administered and reports developed on a more consistent basis.

Evaluation data is consistently used to determine if a child is eligible for special education.
A "Multidisciplinary Team Assessment/Eligibility Report" is completed for all students and a copy is provided to the parents.

Students who transfer in to our school sometimes come with files that are incomplete and/ or out of date. Files are reviewed as we receive them to determine the status or the placement of the student. The team also makes informed decisions through evaluations to dismiss students from services. Students are reevaluated to determine continued eligibility for services.

Validation Result

Promising practice
The review team did not validate the area of promising practice identified by the steering committee. The administration of tests meeting the states regulations is a general requirement.

Meets requirements
The review team validates that the Isabel School District uses comprehensive evaluations with parent input. Written notice and consent are received prior to evaluation. Evaluation data is consistently used to determine if a child is eligible for special education.

Students are reevaluated to determine continued eligibility for services. A multidisciplinary team assessment report is completed for all students and a copy is provided to the parents.

Students who transfer into the district have files reviewed to determine the status or the placement of the student.

The team also makes informed decisions through evaluations to dismiss students from services.

Out of compliance
ARSD 24:05:25:04, Evaluation procedures
School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, a child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability and those evaluation procedures include a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child. There was no evidence of functional assessment into the evaluation process in a review of five out of twelve files.

Three out of five files reviewed did not have an evaluation completed that address a transition aged student's interests and skills.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary
Data sources used:
- Comprehensive plan
- Parent rights brochure
- Prior notice form

Meets requirements
The steering committee concluded that parents are sent a copy of the parental rights handbook with each prior notice sent out.
A surrogate parent is assigned when necessary and appropriate agencies are contacted to represent the child if needed.

Information is provided to parents in their native language, and parents have the opportunity to inspect their child's educational records.

District procedures are in place to address complaint actions and hearing requests.

Validation Results

Meets requirements
The review team agrees with the areas identified by the steering committee as meets requirements.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary
Data sources used:
- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher surveys
- Parent surveys
- Student file reviews
- Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- Hearings
- Monitoring
- Student file reviews

Meets requirements
The steering committee identified areas of meets requirements to be that required members are invited and participate in IEP meetings. Written notice is provided for all IEP meetings, and an IEP is developed and in effect for all eligible students.

Student progress is reported as often for disabled as non-disabled students.

Students have the opportunity to work at their individual levels using the computer labs with the Success Maker programs.

Needs improvement
The steering committee identified areas of needs improvement to be that, as a team we need to improve in the area of functional assessment and areas of duration and modification. Annual goals need to be skill based and linked to present levels of performance. Justification for placement statements need to state why instruction cannot occur in the regular classroom settings.

Agency involvement needs to be considered for transition age students. Transition plans for students with disabilities needs to represent a coordinated set of activities

Validation Results

Meets requirements
The review team agrees with all areas identified by the steering committee as meeting the requirements.

Needs improvement
The review team could not validate areas identified by the steering committee as needing improvement.

Out of compliance
24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program
A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the skill areas affected by the students identified disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. One student had a goal for writing however; writing was not addressed in the present levels of performance. Two students did not have skill specific information in their present levels of performance. For example, "Improve reading and math skills". Transition was not addressed in the present levels of performance on five out of five files reviewed for transition aged students.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program
A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:
> (a) Meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum; and
> (2) Meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability.

In six files reviewed, the student's annual goals were not consistently written as measurable, and did not have the condition. For example, "___will respond to humor, sarcasm appropriately with 90% accuracy three out of four times." "__will use appropriate social skills by mastering the following short term objectives with 90% accuracy." "___will complete given math problems with 80% accuracy 7 out of 10 trials." "___will increase his personal skills by meeting the following short term objectives."

Transition was not addressed in the goals and objectives for three out of five students of transition age; therefore it was not documented that these students were receiving services in the area of transition.

24:05:27:13:02 Transition services
Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The review team determined that five out of five transition services did not contain service recommendations that are individualized. They do not correlate to the student's life planning outcomes. For employment and adult services, all transition aged students have the same recommendations. "All students attend a group job service presentation given at the school". Transition is not seen in the present levels of performance or carried over to the goals and objectives. The district did not provide a coordinated set of activities, which would promote movement from school to post-school activities.

ARSD 24:05:28:02 Continuum of alternative placements
The IEP team must address the justification for placement through the statement in the IEP. This statement must include an explanation of the

extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the general classroom and in extracurricular and non-academic activities. Two early childhood justification statements did not address the required content. For example, "Early childhood special education setting is accepted as this type of service best meets __ needs."

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary
Data sources used:
- Comprehensive plan
- Parent surveys
- Student file reviews
- Data table F placement alternatives

Meets requirements
The steering team concluded that students are placed in the least restrictive environments by the IEP team.

Validation Results

Meets requirements
The review team agrees with the steering committee's conclusion that the district meets the requirements for least restrictive environment.